

Meeting the Needs of the 21st Century Workforce

As part of the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau's "Strengthening the Family" initiative, Director Shinae Chun is exploring workplace flexibility, such as comp time. Workplace flexibility is an important issue for the 21st Century workforce, especially for working women.

According to Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, "The Department of Labor is having to change what it does to keep fulfilling its mission of serving workers. Many people today value flexibility and freedom as much as they do their weekly

paycheck. That means we need to give employers and employees the option to substitute paid time off in lieu of mandatory overtime. If a worker wants to convert time-and-a-half into comp time to go to their child's soccer game, he or she should have that choice. In fact, people who work for the federal government already have that ability; so should the rest of America."

Modernization of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 would give private sector workers the same flexibility currently enjoyed by

their federal counterparts and would reflect demographics, attitudes and behaviors regarding work and family life not present when the act was enacted. One of the key changes is the number of women in the labor force today compared to a generation ago, as demonstrated by figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau:

- In 1940 there were 12.9 million women and girls in the labor force compared to 66.1 million in 2001.

- In 1940, 24.5 percent of the labor force was made up of women and girls compared to 46.6 percent in 2001.

When Director Chun meets with women business owners, she advises, "Flexible scheduling should be used as an instrument for balancing work and family needs and for recruiting and retaining employees by businesses facing a labor shortage. Flexible options would also boost job satisfaction and labor productivity of current employees."

WANTO Grants Promote Nontraditional Occupations for Women

Women Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grants to community-based organizations provide training to women in pre-apprenticeship programs and technical assistance to employers and labor unions.

These grants focus on giving women the mental and physical training they need to succeed in the trades.

For almost a decade, the Department of Labor's (DOL) Women's Bureau has worked in coordination with DOL's Employment and Training

Administration (ETA) to encourage the employment of women in nontraditional and apprenticeable occupations with the WANTO grant program. The Women's Bureau coordinates outreach to employers and labor unions to inform them about the assistance and programs that are available.

Currently, under the WANTO grant program, 11 community-based organizations are recipients of the 2001 awards.

The DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that jobs in construction will grow 13.3 percent (more than 989,000 jobs) by 2010.



Nontraditional skilled jobs are attractive to women because they generally offer higher entry-level wages and a career ladder with pay between \$20 and \$30 per hour. Engineers, architects, police and detectives, electronic technicians, technologists and the bulk of the skilled trades represented in the construction industry are all examples of non-traditional occupations that are expected to exhibit fast growth and create a

large number of opportunities for America's work force.

The DOL defines a nontraditional job as any occupation that women comprise 25 percent or less of the total employment in that field.

The skilled trades are also facing a labor shortage, so educating women about opportunities in these fields supports the competitive workforce goal of Secretary Chao.

As large numbers of skilled workers retire from the workforce, filling the skills gap and identifying future workers for these important jobs is central to keeping the U.S. competitive and strong. Women can have an essential role to play in filling these jobs.

+++++

Articles on this page reprinted with permission from the US Department of Labor. For more information, visit the DOL Web site at www.dol.gov/.

Percentage of workers 45 and older leaving the occupation by 2008*:

- Telephone installers and repairers **69.6%**
- Construction worker supervisors **65.9%**
- Industrial machinery repairers **60.4%**
- Brick masons and stonemasons **56.7%**
- Construction inspectors **45.9%**

*Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor Denver Post, "Trades under deconstruction," July 5, 2002

2002–2003 Executive Board
www.wa.gov/icsew

Chair

Annykay Melendez
State Auditor's Office
Mailstop: 40031
(360) 586-2273
melendea@sao.wa.gov

Vice Chair

Rose Pelegrin
Department of Labor and Industries
pele235@lni.wa.gov

Executive Secretary
Micheal Eastin

Employment Security Department
meastin@esd.wa.gov

Budget

Jerri Bennett
Secretary of State
jbennett@secstate.wa.gov

Communications
Laura Leland

Department of Retirement Systems
Mailstop: 48380
laural@drs.wa.gov

Conference

Pat Delaney
Department of Labor and Industries
deln235@lni.wa.gov

Education

Vicki Meyer
Insurance Commission
vickim@oic.wa.gov

Health and Wellness

Vicki Rummig
Office of Financial Management
vicki.rummig@ofm.wa.gov

Membership

Jude Cryderman
Administrative Office of the Courts
jude.cryderman@courts.wa.gov

**Promotional and
Career Opportunities
Vacant**

Historian

Mary Briggs
General Administration
mbriggs@ga.wa.gov

Family Care Task Force

Amy Ridgeway
Health Care Authority
ARid107@HCA.wa.gov

**Take Our Daughters and Sons
To Work Day**
Diane Partridge

Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals
partridge@biia.wa.gov

Refuse to Remain Silent

By Laura Leland
Communications Chair

There's an epidemic in this town. The symptoms are violent and insidious. They range from bruises to broken bones and sometimes death. Most sufferers endure in silence. Those who do tell, see their symptoms increase. No one is immune. It can happen to your best friend, your daughter or the person sitting next to you.

Between 1997 and 2001, there were 184 domestic violence-related homicides in Washington State. The majority were women (58 percent, according to the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence). And that's not all. Approximately 1.5 million women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States.

I know you think you've heard it all before—and you probably have—domestic violence has been around a long, long time. But here's something you might not know:

You can do something about it.

Did you know that your unwillingness to get involved when you hear or see a violent act is a form of complied consent? It's a paradox, but your silence is extremely loud. By not telling, you're saying it's okay.

Many of us are shy about calling the police. Violence is frightening. If you've ever been a witness to a fistfight, then you know what I mean. Most of us remember fights breaking out in the halls of our high school. And some of us don't trust what we're seeing or hearing. We're afraid of making a mistake and causing the police to arrive at a scene where nothing is really happening.

In October, I attended a workshop

on domestic violence offered through the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW). Most of the speakers confirmed what I already knew, but I was still hoping to come away with something I could share with all of you that would make a difference in the lives of domestic violence victims. I did. Here it is:

You can do something about it now.

I'm talking about doing *more* than giving to the local women's shelter (although that's a very good thing to do, and if you're giving, please don't stop). I'm talking about getting *involved*. If you don't care about your community, who will? The police? Lawmakers? They're doing the best they can, but they can only do so much. If we want to quell the pace of domestic violence, we must do more.

You can do something about it here.

The workplace is the perfect place to start:

- If you suspect a coworker is in distress, ask how they are doing and if there is any way you can help. Take a personal interest in them and take the time to know their issues, without infringing on privacy. If you don't know your coworkers, how comfortable will they feel about coming to you if they are in distress?
- Be a good listener. Keep all discussions with your coworker confidential. She needs to know that you are available, willing to help, and most importantly, that you can be trusted (do this before it becomes so serious that she is incapable of doing her job).
- Don't be judgmental. Create a "safe" working environment—physically, mentally, and emotionally.
- Inform her of services in the

community—The Employee Advisory Service, Safeplace, the Crisis Hotline, etc.

- Don't blame the victim. Don't ask, "Why do you stay?" Ask, "How can I help?"
- If the employee leaves her relationship, don't expect that she should just "get over it" right away. There are extreme dangers when women leave. Stalking and harassment are common. She may have a lot of court appointments. There may be custody battles. She may have a hard time financially (most common). She may have a hard time emotionally because her personal safety is such a strong concern. Be supportive and keep the communication lines open.

Refuse to remain silent. Make 2003 the year domestic violence is no longer an epidemic. Read below for more information.



If you are dealing with domestic violence and need help, please call the Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-562-6025 (V/TTY). Advocates will transfer you to a domestic violence program in your area that can assist you.

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a non-profit, 501(c)3 network of 64 domestic violence programs in rural, urban and Indian Country communities of Washington. Their mission is to end domestic violence through advocacy and action for social change.

For more information and resources on domestic violence, or how you can make a difference in the lives of battered women and children, please contact the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, (360) 407-0756, or visit their Web site at www.wscadv.org.

Health & Wellness Corner

Countdown for a Healthy Life

Here are ten things you can do to help live longer, live better and live happier:

Number 10: Be Informed. For health information you can trust from both governmental and non-governmental sources, here are two gateway information centers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that can help: www.4woman.gov/ available by phone at 1-800-994-WOMAN, TDD 1-888-220-5446 and www.healthfinder.gov/.

Number 9: Be Good To Your Bones. For healthy bones, be sure to replenish your stock of calcium every day with plenty of foods like milk and dairy products, tofu, leafy

green vegetables, canned salmon or sardines, and calcium-fortified juices or breads. Speak with your doctor about calcium supplements.

Number 8: Avoid Illegal Drugs and Alcohol. For women, the definition of moderate drinking stops at one glass. And where illicit drugs are concerned there is no such thing as "moderate" use.

Number 7: Take Medicine Wisely. Read the labels, follow the instructions carefully and remind your doctor or pharmacist about any other medicines or supplements you might be taking that could interact with your medication. If you have any questions about possible

side effects call your doctor or pharmacist.

Number 6: Play It Safe. Avoid injuries. Buckle up. Wear a bike helmet. Use smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Wear sunscreen and UV protected sunglasses. Use street smarts and common sense. Practice safe sex.

Number 5: Get Checked. Get regular checkups, preventive exams and immunizations. Don't forget self-exams, too.

Number 4: Don't Smoke. It's the leading preventable cause of death in our country.

Number 3: Eat Smart. It's the

secret to good health. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and grains. Enjoy a variety of foods, balance foods from each food group and exercise moderation. Try the food pyramid at : www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/food/food-pyramid/main.htm.

Number 2: Get Moving. The other secret to good health: just 30 minutes of physical activity each day can radically improve the way you look and feel, both physically and mentally.

Number 1: Be Happy. Take time for yourself. Get connected with family, friends and community. Do things you enjoy!

Working Women and Economics

Women Are a Significant Part of the Workforce

- Women accounted for 46% of total United States labor force participants in 1994 and are projected to compromise 48% in the year 2005.
—Nancy Campbell, "Women and Work," Ohio State University Women's Studies Department, 1998
- Of the 26 million net increase in the civilian labor force between 1990 and 2005, women will account for 15 million or 62% of net growth.
—US Department of Labor Women's Bureau, "Women Workers: Outlook to 2005," 1992

Women Work to Support Themselves and Their Families

- 70% of working women work out of economic necessity.
—US Census Bureau
- 41% of working women are the sole providers for their households. They are single, divorced, separated or widowed. 28% have dependent children.
—1997 AFL-CIO survey, "Ask a Working Woman"
- Of the 68.5 million families in the United States in 1993, 12.4 million (18 %) were headed by women -- 8 million were white, 3.8 million were black and 1.5 million were Hispanic.
—Nancy Campbell, "Women and Work," Ohio State University Women's Studies Department, 1998

State Government Women Collect 3,200 Pounds of Clothing for WorkFirst Clients

By Jeff Weathersby
Department of Social
and Health Services

OLYMPIA -- Hundreds of women working for state agencies have collected approximately 3,200 pounds of used professional clothing that will be given to WorkFirst clients to help them dress appropriately for interviews and their new jobs. The first deliveries of clothes were sent to WorkSource offices around the state on Dec. 10. WorkSource offices are among numerous WorkFirst locations where clients go to learn to write resumes, polish interviewing skills and apply for work.

WorkFirst is Washington's welfare reform program that helps financially struggling families find jobs, keep their jobs, get better jobs and build a better life for their children.

The clothes drive is a project of the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW),

according to June Hershey, the clothing drive coordinator for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). She said the drive has taken place in Thurston County for the past three years. But this year it went statewide. She said ICSEW coordinators at each state agency sent out requests for clean professional clothing at the beginning of October.

The drive continued through Thanksgiving. Volunteers spent part of their Thanksgiving vacations at the DSHS warehouse in Tumwater sorting and boxing the garments. The clothing includes suits, dresses, skirts, slacks, panty hose and lots of women's shoes. Hershey said some of the clothing, from makers such as Ann Taylor and Saks Fifth Avenue, still bears original price labels. Employees, and even members of one person's church, also donated purses and briefcases. Professional clothing for men also was collected.

Hershey said the clothing will be sent to WorkSource offices as they

request it. "It will be dispersed on a first come, first served basis," she said. The clothing is being provided without any cost to the state, she emphasized. In some cases, the clothing is sent with trucks delivering office furniture and supplies from the

Tumwater warehouse. In other cases, employees traveling to the Olympia area for meetings stop at the warehouse to pick up loads to take to their local offices.

Reprinted with permission.

From an email to the clothing drive coordinator, June Hershey:

June, I just wanted you to know how quickly those clothes were put to use. I was unpacking one of the boxes when a food stamp participant needed an outfit for an interview and there were none in the closet in her size. We found a great outfit in the first box we opened. The word quickly spread that we had some additional clothes and we were soon able to help out several other people that afternoon.

Your contributions came in the nick of time as we had a very limited selection left and not much coming in, either in clothing or cash donations. If there is any way to let those who contributed the clothing know that we are extremely grateful for their contribution and that they have made many people very happy, please do so. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Jan Baur
Supervisor for WorkFirst with
Employment Security at WorkSource
Vancouver Town Plaza

Did you Know?

United States ranks highest among countries in women's share in decision making in management and in the economy.

United Nations Development Fund for Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2000*

ICSEW and State Agencies Thanked for Donating Cell Phones to those in Need

Thank you for donating over 600 wireless phones to Verizon Wireless' HopeLine program. Your donation will be used to support non-profit organizations committed to combating domestic violence, providing emergency relief, and supporting health and education initiatives.

Thank you!

Verizon Wireless
180 Washington Valley Road
Bedminster, NJ 07931



American Women Waiting to Begin Families

The average American woman was almost 25 years old when she had her first child in the year 2000.

That's compared to an average age of 21.4 years for a first birth in 1970, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The report, released in December 2002, also shows that the average (or mean) age of mothers for all births rose from 24.6 years to 27.2 over the past three decades.

From 1970 to 2000, the number

of women completing college has nearly doubled and the number in the labor force has gone up by almost 40 percent. Changes in contraception use, economic cycles, social support and marriage patterns should also be considered.

"Mean Age of Mother, 1970 to 2000" can be viewed or downloaded at the CDC Web Site at www.cdc.gov/nchs.

Reprinted with permission from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

InterACT is published by the Communications Committee of the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW). Photocopying, distributing and posting of this publication is strongly encouraged. This publication is available in alternate formats. All persons interested in submitting articles or ideas for this publication should contact their agency's ICSEW representative or:

Laura Leland, InterACT Editor
Department of Retirement Systems
P.O. Box 48380
Olympia WA 98504-8380

Phone: (360) 664-7160
Email: laural@drs.wa.gov
 Printed on Recycled Paper